

TRIBUTE TO CLEMENCIA SPIZZIRRI

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to take this time to honor an extraordinary Iowa teacher who has had a positive impact on a great many students. Ms. Clemencia Spizzirri was recently announced as the 2015 Iowa Teacher of the Year. This award honors the great work she has done as a foreign language teacher at Merrill Middle School in Des Moines, IA.

Ms. Spizzirri has been teaching Spanish to eager young minds at Merrill Middle School for 5 years. Despite her relatively short time there, her profound impact is evident. The high praise she receives from her students, colleagues, and community members are a testament to the work ethic and passion she displays in her classroom every schoolday.

As an immigrant herself, Ms. Spizzirri embodies the importance of a broad-based education that helps students understand the world beyond their own country. Born in Quito, Ecuador's capital city, Ms. Clemencia was the youngest of seven children. She learned quickly that success was nearly impossible without a quality education. This drove her to become a teacher. She witnessed firsthand the struggles that accompany poverty and knew she could make a difference through teaching. She started her career teaching English in Quito. When the conditions in her country began to worsen, she obtained a visa and moved to the United States. After immigrating to this country, Ms. Spizzirri received a bachelor's degree in New York. She then moved to Des Moines, IA, where she received her master's degree from Drake University.

Ms. Spizzirri attributes her passion for educating young minds to unfortunate circumstances she has witnessed in her own life. This passion ensures a quality education for all her students and contributes well-rounded citizens to the community. Great teachers are an invaluable resource to all of our communities and Ms. Spizzirri deserves nothing but praise for her tremendous work. I thank Ms. Spizzirri for her service to the people of our community and wish her nothing but the best in her future school years and beyond.

REMEMBERING MARK HESSE

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I wish to remember an upstanding Coloradan and accomplished mountaineer who passed away unexpectedly this year while doing what he was so passionate about: climbing. Mark Hesse was a man of exceptional character, exhibited a strong sense of adventure, and was a devoted admirer of nature; all of which are qualities of a true conservationist. He was an inspiration to many of us in the great State of Colorado.

Mark grew up in Colorado Springs, CO, where he became an Eagle Scout.

Upon graduating from the University of Colorado at Boulder with a master's degree in special education and teaching, Mark took to traveling abroad in pursuit of climbing peaks around the world. In 1976, he became the first person to climb the completely vertical southeast face of Mount Asgard on Baffin Island. In 1986, he made the first ascent up the northeast buttress of Kangtega in Nepal, a prominent Himalayan peak with a summit of over 20,000 feet. These ascents, among countless others, inspired him to advocate for conservation and accomplish so much for Colorado's environment.

He is survived by Julie Asmuth, his wife of 30 years, his two daughters Hartley and Laurel, his mother Florence, brothers Jon, Paul, Phil, and sisters Anne Ness and Maria Hesse Vasey.

Mark was a loyal and devoted husband and father. He had a warm personality and a great sense of humor. He also had an amazing knack for turning ordinary outings into epic adventures, and thus was well known for adventure stories that seemed almost too absurd to be true. These qualities enabled him to inspire and educate his children and their peers, as well as the friends and colleagues he had through climbing and service projects he was part of. Mark was devoted to taking his family on trips to some of the most remote places possible, including the rainforests in South America and the ocean reefs of South East Asia. He believed in supporting ecotourism and educating himself and his family about different cultures and natural wonders of the world before they disappeared.

Mark loved the environment, believed in a higher standard for managing public spaces, and was committed to preserving the natural beauty of our great Nation. He received several distinguished awards for his work, such as the American Alpine Club's David Brower Award for Mountain Conservation in 1995, the Bob Marshall Champion of Wilderness Award presented by the U.S. Forest Service in 2005 and 2007, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Making a Difference National Volunteer Award for outstanding service on public lands in 2014. He was the co-founder and executive director of the Santa Fe Mountain Center from 1977 to 1980, the program director of the Southwest Outward Bound School, and co-founder of the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative Program. He worked with the Bureau of Land Management to preserve two popular climbing destinations: Shelf Road and Penitente Canyon. Perhaps most notably, Mark founded the Rocky Mountain Field Institute in 1982, which has engaged more than 16,000 volunteers to contribute 200,000 hours to public land stewardship projects. These efforts amounted to more than \$4 million in on-the-ground restoration efforts.

One of Mark's final projects, and a dream he had been nurturing for many years, was to create a hot-shot trail crew with high-end rock working skills

that could build climbing access trails in the steep, rocky, and unstable terrain where climbers travel. At the time of his passing, Mark was collaborating with the Boulder Climbing Community and the Access Fund, two non-profits based in Boulder, to develop the Front Range Climbing Stewards trail crew. The project moved forward, inspired by Mark's lifetime of work, and in 2014 the trail crew performed more than \$120,000 worth of work, in both Eldorado Canyon and the Flatirons, including the spectacular rebuild of the iconic Royal Arch Trail that was destroyed in the flood of 2013.

Colorado lost an irreplaceable individual with the passing of Mark Hesse. I, along with many others, have lost a respected leader, visionary, and friend. Let his life be a reminder of what every American is capable of accomplishing.

I ask that my colleagues join me in remembering Mark Hesse for his passion for the outdoors, his vast wealth of experiences, and his leadership in showing us how to be good stewards of our public lands.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES NIX

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I wish to honor Charles Nix, who will retire as the Poinsett County judge after three terms of honorable service to the citizens of Arkansas in this elected position.

As Poinsett County judge, Charles faced and overcame several disasters including the 2011 flood and multiple tornadoes. Charles played a pivotal role in leading the county through the storms, repairing the damages and restoring the livelihood of the citizens.

Beyond his county judge duties, Charles served as a member of the County Judges Association of Arkansas, Crowley's Ridge Development Council Board, Eastern Arkansas Planning and Development Council Board, and Northwest Arkansas Workforce Investment. He also presided as president of the Harrisburg Area Chamber of Commerce and served in the Army National Guard for 6 years.

Charles Nix has displayed honor, perseverance, and an eagerness to serve his community that we can all admire. I am truly grateful for his years of dedicated service and commitment to Poinsett County and the State of Arkansas. •

RECOGNIZING ST. PATRICK SCHOOL

• Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I wish to applaud St. Patrick School of Chesterton, IN for being recognized as a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools program has recognized over 7,000 public and nonpublic schools that demonstrate a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic

background. Since its inception, this program has offered the opportunity for schools in every State to gain recognition for educational accomplishments in closing the achievement gaps among student groups.

Recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education is based on a school being measured as either an "Exemplary High Performing School"—where schools are among the State's highest scorers in English and mathematics—or as an "Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing School"—where schools with at least 40 percent of their student body coming from disadvantaged backgrounds have reduced the achievement gap in English and mathematics within the last 5 years. St. Patrick School has made great strides in the area of improved proficiency in both English and mathematics.

As a Four Star School, St. Patrick's takes great care to integrate elements of Catholic faith into its curriculum. Consisting of strong morals, a deeply rooted faith in community, and a strong sense of respectful conduct, the staff at St. Patrick challenges its students to put their faith into action through community service and social engagement on global issues.

I wish to acknowledge Principal Richard John Rupcich of St. Patrick School, the entire staff, and the student body. It undoubtedly took hard work and dedication to achieve this prestigious award.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate St. Patrick School, and I wish them continued success in the future.●

TRIBUTE TO DONALD LINDBERG

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, as a member of the Senate who has spent many years leading efforts to build support for biomedical research and improved public health, I would like to pay tribute to a great public servant and trailblazer in medical informatics, Donald A.B. Lindberg, Director of the National Library of Medicine, NLM, the world's largest biomedical library, and a part of the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Lindberg recently announced that he will retire next year after over 30 years of distinguished public service.

Trained as a pathologist, Dr. Lindberg is recognized worldwide as a pioneer in medical information technology, artificial intelligence, computer-aided medical diagnosis and electronic health records. When Dr. Lindberg joined NLM in 1984, the library had no electronic journals, personal computers were few and far between, and only a relatively small number of research institutions had access to the Internet. Today millions of scientists, health professionals, and members of the public use NLM's high-quality electronic information resources billions of times a year.

Dr. Lindberg arrived at NLM with a belief in the potential of advanced computing and telecommunications.

He immediately launched the groundbreaking Unified Medical Language System, now broadly used to help computer systems behave as if they understand biomedical meaning. He also greatly expanded NLM's informatics research training programs, increasing the Nation's supply of informatics researchers and health information technology leaders. The library, its grantees, and its former trainees continue to play essential roles in the development of electronic health records, health data standards, and the exchange of health information.

One of the proudest achievements of Dr. Lindberg's tenure was the establishment of the National Center for Biotechnology Information, NCBI, in 1988. It expanded the scope of the NLM and provided a national resource for molecular biology information and essential support for mapping the human genome. Today, NCBI is home to GenBank, dbGaP, PubChem, and PubMed Central and is an indispensable international repository and software tool developer for genetic sequences and other genomic data, and a pioneer and leader in linking data and published research results to promote new scientific discoveries.

In another unprecedented move, Dr. Lindberg asked NLM to create the Visible Humans, a library of digital images representing the complete anatomy of a man and a woman—giving a unique and detailed look inside the body. People around the world can and do use the images in a variety of ways. They have been used to help students learn anatomy; to develop products like artificial limbs; and to create tools to help surgeons rehearse operations.

As access to the World Wide Web and the Internet spread throughout the country, Dr. Lindberg seized the opportunity to make high quality medical information freely available to the public. In a 1997 press briefing that I sponsored with the late Senator Arlen Specter, R-PA, and then Vice President Al Gore, we announced free Internet access to MEDLINE via PubMed. In 1998, Dr. Lindberg went on to create the consumer-friendly MedlinePlus.gov and a new era of timely and trusted online health information for the general public began. ClinicalTrials.gov, now the world's largest trial registry and a unique source of summary results data for many trials, followed soon after in 2000, providing patients, families and members of the public easy access to information about the location of clinical trials, their design and purpose, and criteria for participation.

In 2003, I again joined the NLM and the National Institute on Aging in launching NIHSeniorHealth.gov, a website that features authoritative, up-to-date information from the NIH, in a format that addresses the cognitive changes that come with aging and allows easy use. In that same year, I partnered with Dr. Lindberg and respected national physician groups to launch the Information Rx project,

which supplies prescription pads to health providers to point their patients to trusted health care information from the NIH. At the urging of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Dr. Lindberg has also made high-quality health information available to physicians and their patients via NIH's first consumer magazine, NIH MedlinePlus. This free magazine is now available in Spanish and online around the Nation and worldwide.

Over the past three decades, Dr. Lindberg greatly expanded the scope of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine. Now, NLM and this network of more than 6,000 academic, hospital, and public libraries partner with community-based organizations to bring high-quality information to health professionals and the public—regardless of location, socioeconomic status or access to computers and telecommunications. NLM has entered into long-standing and successful partnerships with minority-serving institutions, tribal and community-based organizations, and the public health community. NLM's marvelous exhibitions which Dr. Lindberg championed, such as Native Voices: Native Peoples' Concepts of Health and Illness, expand NLM's reach with electronic and traveling versions, bringing important issues and scholarship to persons unable to make it through NLM's Bethesda doors. Moreover, Dr. Lindberg helped set the U.S. standards for the public's use of the Internet. He was the founding Director of the National Coordination Office for High Performance Computing and Communications in the President's Office of Science and Technology Policy and was named by the HHS Secretary to be the U.S. National Coordinator for the G-7 Global Healthcare Applications Project.

It gives me great pleasure pay tribute to Dr. Donald A.B. Lindberg, one of this country's visionaries, for his many contributions in science and technology that have transformed access to biomedical information and clearly had a lasting positive impact on the Nation.●

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL ROBERT J. McALEER

● Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to my constituent COL Robert J. McAleer for his exemplary dedication to duty and his service to the U.S. Army and to the United States of America. He has served his last 2 years in the Army as Chief of the Army's Senate Liaison Division, representing the Army on Capitol Hill.

A native of Washington State, Colonel McAleer earned a commission as a distinguished graduate from the U.S. Military Academy in 1988. Colonel McAleer has served in a broad range of challenging operational assignments and an unusually diverse set of Army units: cannon artillery, rocket and missile, air defense, light infantry, cavalry, Ranger, Special Forces, and Stryker.